

AC 4436(1) GT TORRINGTON

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE BOROUGH OF GREAT TORRINGTON
FOR THE YEAR 1951.

During the year the general health of the Borough was very satisfactory - apart from the influenza epidemic which was widespread throughout the country at the beginning of the year.

BIRTHS. There were 69 live births: 36 boys and 33 girls. This includes one twin birth (boy and girl). Three of these babies were illegitimate. The average number of births for the previous 5 years was 58.

There were no stillbirths.

DEATHS. There were 46 deaths: 22 male and 24 female. The average for the previous 5 years was 47. This gives a death rate per 1,000 of 15.5: the general death rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1951 was 12.5 per 1,000.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

Cardiac degeneration and senility.....	18
Cardiac disease.....	5
Cerebral vascular disease.....	6
Other disease of circulatory system....	2
Bronchitis, chronic.....	3
Pneumonia and bronchopneumonia.....	2
Pleurisy.....	1
Cancer of bladder.....	1
Cancer of breast.....	1
Cancer of lung.....	1
Cancer of palate.....	1
Cancer of prostate.....	1
Leukaemia.....	1
Strangulated hernia.....	1
Drowning, accidental.....	1

Average ages:.. Male 70 Female 75

INFANTS UNDER 1 YEAR

Asphyxia at birth.....	1
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TUBERCULOSIS. There were no alterations in the Register during the year. The cases on the Register were :-

<u>Pulmonary</u>	Male 6	Female 7
<u>Non-pulmonary</u>	Male 0	Female 3

During April and May the Mass Radiography Unit of the South Western Regional Hospital Board visited Torrington.



A total of 471 persons had their chests X-Rayed - 328 males and 143 females. (Some of these were from outside the Borough). Fourteen of these persons were recalled for re-X-Ray. Two of them did not attend: three of the others (all males) were found to be suffering from active tuberculosis, and 2 (1 male and 1 female) had healed tuberculosis, while the remaining seven persons had non-tuberculous disease which required treatment.

VENEREAL DISEASE.

No case came to my notice. Facilities for treatment are available at Barnstaple.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

During the early weeks of the year the influenza epidemic caused much sickness. Twenty cases of pneumonia had been reported by the beginning of April: only one of these was fatal. No other death was attributable to influenza.

During May there was a sharp outbreak of measles, chiefly among the younger School-children. Only one adult was affected.

There was no other epidemic; and no case of poliomyelitis.

The following cases of infectious disease were notified during the year :-

Measles.....	48	Dysentery.....	1
Pneumonia.....	21	Erysipelas.....	1
Scarlet Fever.....	1	Puerperal Pyrexia.....	1
Whooping Cough.....	1		

CARE OF EXPECTANT AND NURSING MOTHERS.

There is no Ante-natal Clinic in Torrington. Patients receive ante-natal care from their own doctors, and the District Nurse/Midwives make regular visits to their homes.

CARE OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

The Child Welfare Clinic is held fortnightly by the Health Visitor. It is well attended.

DOMICILIARY MIDWIFERY SERVICE.

Domiciliary midwifery is conducted by the Queen's Institute District Nurse/Midwives. They have motor cars, and are equipped with gas/air analgesia machines. Maternity packets are provided by the Devon County Council.



HEALTH VISITING SERVICE.

Routine visits to all maternity cases after confinement are made by the County Health Visitor. Visits are made to the homes of tuberculous patients when necessary.

AMBULANCE SERVICE.

The Ambulance Service has continued to work smoothly and efficiently, and there has been close co-operation with the Red Cross nurses. A midwife has been in attendance whenever a woman in labour has been carried.

Patients carried during the year.....345

Total Mileage.....11443

DOMESTIC HELP SERVICE.

There is no organised home help. County grants are made towards casual home helps (e.g. for domiciliary midwifery patients).

TORRINGTON & DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Admissions during 1951.....	220
Out-patients seen.....	511
Total out-patient attendances.....	1086
Maternity cases.....	52

BLOOD DONORS.


The National Blood Transfusion Service (South-Western Region) visited Torrington during September, and eighty persons gave blood for transfusion.

WATER SUPPLY

Water from the reservoir is purified by slow sand filtration followed by chlorination. Apart from examinations of the raw water, eight bacteriological examinations of the water going into supply were made during the year. Early in May contamination was found; this was thought to be due to work which had just started on the mains. Chlorination was increased, and all subsequent examinations have been satisfactory.

The water is not plumbo-solvent.

The supply of water was adequate during the year, although the level in the reservoir had become very low by September. The distribution has been very unsatisfactory for many years; during 1951 the water mains to a large part of the built-up area were renewed, and by the end of the year the supply was improved to most of those parts of the town which had been so badly served in the past. But further improvements are needed, and it is likely that these will be effected when the remaining part of the trunk main has been renewed - this part of the existing main shows extensive corrosion.



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It is hoped that authority to complete this work will soon be obtained from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

In order to prevent corrosion in the new mains, with recurrence of the troubles from which we have been suffering in the past, it is essential that adequate filtration and treatment of the raw water be carried out as soon as possible. To achieve this a new treatment plant and service reservoir are necessary.

There is a piped supply to all houses in the built-up area (population about 2,700). Outlying farms and cottages (population about 200) obtain water from their own wells - all water for domestic purposes has to be boiled.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Work is continuing on construction of the sewage treatment plant serving the Torridge Vale and Bidnawell areas. This should be in use by about the middle of 1952. The plant will be capable of taking all the sewage from the town; and it is hoped that it will soon be possible to replace entirely the present obsolete form of sewage disposal.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

No animals for general consumption are slaughtered within the Borough.

The foodstuffs condemned during the year were :-

Cocked ham.....	106 $\frac{1}{2}$	lbs.
Beef.....	26	"
Tinned Meats.....	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	"
Tinned Fruits.....	7	"
Tinned Vegetables.....	3	"
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	146 $\frac{1}{4}$	"

No ice-cream is manufactured in the Borough.

FOOD-POISONING.

There was no case of food-poisoning.

W. R. Duggs

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

